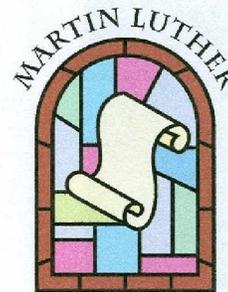


Congregational newsletter



December 2006 / January 2007

LUTHERAN CHURCH
— Founded 1955 Gegründet —

Devotion on the Verse of the Month for December

*Dear Members and Friends of
Martin Luther Church!*

Many Advent and Christmas customs originated in a time in when people were worse off than we are today. Not until between the third and fifth century Christmas became a church

celebration. This means that Christian congregations did not celebrate Christmas from the beginning on. Between the ninth and 16th

century many traditions in regards to Christmas became customary of which we have kept quite a few until today, like, for example, the singing of Christmas carols, the display of nativity scenes and the decoration of churches and homes. Since the times of Martin Luther children received little presents for Christmas. The Christ child “brought” those presents. Christmas Eve was one of the few days during the year when people had plenty to eat. Animals were fattened for this occasion and people hoped superstitiously that fortune and prosperity

would follow if they would consume the food completely. At the same time the Catholic Church prohibited gluttony and called it a sin. It is known that monks grew mirror carps, which, - because they were shorter and thicker then the common carp, - fit on the plate and therefore did not count as an object of gluttony. There would be much

**With joy you will draw water from the
wells of salvation.**

Isaiah 12:3



more to tell you, but I think it is quite clear what I want to point out to you: Starting with the giving of presents and eating to the celebration as such, Christmas was meant to ‘sweeten’ the tough life of

people and for that alone it had been a very special event. – As we all know, times have changed. Today tables bend

under the weight of food not only at Christmas. Every year it becomes more and more difficult, to make Christmas more special through presents and decoration than the year before. Maybe the only

way to get back the exclusiveness of Christmas is to cut back and revisit to the original meaning of Christmas. What happens at Christmas? Christ is born like any other child. He is born in a stable. The circumstances of his birth are not ideal. A manger must function as his crib. Nevertheless the truly exceptional happens in all simplicity: God becomes human. Like the watchword for the month of December indicates: Out of an ordinary event like a birth or the drawing of water God makes something particular. The salvation we draw is the love of God which comes to us in Jesus, even until

today. This, and nothing else makes Christmas so special.

My Family and I wish you a contemplative Advent- and Christmas Season, a good New Year’s Eve and a blessed New Year.

Your Pastor
Stefan Wolf

One church secretary leaves...

As you might be aware through the announcement during church services Mrs. Kaethe Kleinau is retiring from the position of church secretary after almost three decades of assiduous and diligent work. This is certainly a decisive moment for the congregation. She was “the voice on the telephone” and the coordinator of countless tasks. Personally, I am very happy for Mrs. Kleinau who takes on the not less important task to support her family in the role of a “professional grandmother”. Through moving away from Toronto she won’t be living as close to our congregation anymore, but we will certainly see her again once in while attending services and special occasions of our church. On a more personal note I also would like to take the opportunity to say a word of thanks. I would like to thank you, Mrs. Kleinau, for all the support you have given me. When I arrived in Canada you have paved my way; you have helped me in any given way and also accompanied us as a family through help and advice. This was always much appreciated. We wish you – also as a congregation, of course – God’s blessing for the next phase in your life, which usually is called “RUHEstand” (which is the German word for retirement; meaning “Time of tranquility”) and our hope is that you will enjoy this as long as possible. – We will officially say good-bye to Mrs. Kleinau as church secretary in connection with a service some time next year. *Pastor Stefan Wolf*

A Word on parting

Dear Congregation, With some regrets but also with great joy I have retired from my position as congregational secretary and say good-bye to you, for I am beginning a new phase in my life. - 28 years ago, I came into this work unexpectedly. Every Friday evening, I sat in the Pastor’s office, while my two children, Thomas and Isabel, participated in confirmation instruction. To make use of that time, I asked Pastor Schwantes for some office work. He liked this idea, and shortly after, he offered me a part-time position as secretary; for Pastors, as we all know, are always very busy people. I enjoyed the work, particularly when the administration of the nursery was included. For almost three decades, I experienced at first hand all highs and lows of the church and nursery. Thank God, there were truly more highs than lows. The last years have been particularly eventful and exciting. A secretary cannot wish for a better working relationship than I had with Pastor Wolf. We worked together as friends and the relationship was strengthened by trust and respect. For this, I express my heartfelt thanks to you, dear Pastor Wolf, and I wish you and your family, whom I cherish also, God’s blessings for the new beginning in Germany. Mrs. Anita Ratz, my successor, I wish as much joy in her secretarial position as I have had! During the next few weeks, I shall move to Binbrook, a little village south of Hamilton, very close to my daughter Isabel. Although I will not be able to attend Sunday services regularly any more, I would like to keep in contact with you, dear Congregation. Furthermore, it takes me just as long to drive to Toronto as it takes you to visit me! And my new place is very easy to find. With kind regards and good wishes,

Käthe Kleinau

...another church secretary arrives!

My name is Anita Ratz, I was born in Krefeld, North-Rhine Westfalia Germany and living in Toronto since 1970. I worked 28 years for Lufthansa German Airlines in the sales office downtown Toronto. In 2002 I decided to take the offer of early retirement. Since well over two years I am very happy to belong to this Martin Luther Church. I assure you that as your secretary of the church I will fulfill all my duties diligently and to the best of my ability. You can reach me in the church office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays during the morning hours. Yours *Anita Ratz*



A 'Thank you' from our Day Care

All the daycare staff would like to thank the Martin Luther Church Congregation for your patience with us as we grew and renovated. There are so many members who have made us feel welcome and have helped us when we loose our way. We are all sad to see Kathe Kleinau retire, but are excited for her in her New Home and able to be "Mary Poppins" to her wonderful family. Special thanks to the Ladies' Group for there contribution towards some of our families in need, also to the many, many individuals who drop-off donations for the children or staff, it is all greatly appreciated. As for our programs and renovations, we are looking forward to taking care and pride in our newly fixed up surroundings. We are always interested in visits from Church members, at 5 Superior or in the Church Program. Please, feel free to come by for a coffee on Thursday Dec.28th/06 while we have a Christmas Party from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. We will have a Playground Open House next year and flyers will be posted. *Marilyn Richardson-Furse*

Potluck-Lunch and Advent celebration on Dec. 3rd

Different from previous years we have planned a get-together and a Potluck-lunch right after the church services on the 1. Sunday of Advent. We ask you to bring some food, but no salads, please! If you like to contribute something to the program following the luncheon, please contact Pastor Wolf (416-567-2487).

Christmas Play in the Church Service on the 3rd of Advent

The practices for the Christmas Play have begun, which will be presented on **December 17th**, in a joint Service at **11:00 a.m.** The play is called "**The Story of Christmas – The 2006 Version**"!

This year the children have written the play themselves.

Practices take place on December 3 and 10,

the dress rehearsal is on Friday, December 15, from 5:00 p.m. at the Church.

Following the Church Service we have a Coffee time.

Please bring some cake and cookies! Thanks!

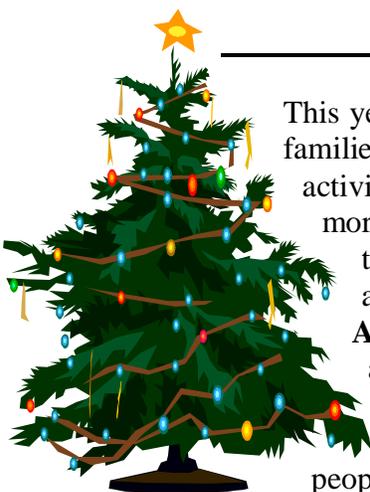


Church Services on Christmas Eve

This year the **first Service** takes place at **4:00 p.m.** This is a Service for everyone, especially families. During the preaching of the sermon, we offer the children a Christmas related activity in our Sunday School. We will also take care that English-speaking visitors gain more from this Service. **Whether big or small, ALL are cordially welcomed!** As it is our tradition, the Church will be festively decorated. Let yourself be pleasantly surprised by a musical performance.

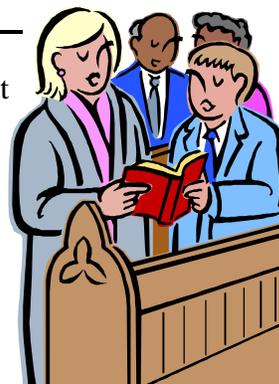
At 6:00 p.m., a Candlelight Service takes place in English, which invites to calmness and relaxation. In this hectic atmosphere of the Christmas Season, we will enjoy the Church, lit by candles.

We hope that, through two different offers this year we can again appeal to more people. We would like to point out that you please attend on time, especially the first Service. Our Church Council members will arrange it so that the Church fills up from the front to the back. This helps to avoid commotion.



Singing Church Service on Christmas Day

This year, the Church Service on First Christmas Day will be held in the afternoon at 5:00 p.m. So the families, who choose to celebrate Christmas according to Canadian tradition in the morning, can come to this Sing-along Service which puts an emphasis on the well-known songs from both traditions. So we can let Christmas come to a musical close.



Jazz-Church Service on January 1st



On New Year's Day, we invite you again to a jazzy Prelude. With music and texts, a sermon on the watchword for the year, we would like to start into the new year. The Jazz quintet, which already played at the Open House and last year's New Year's Day service, will play music from times past. Last year the Service was well attended. We hope to see you there (again)!

A service and movie presentation

On January 28th, we invite you to a joint Service at 11:00 a.m., and a movie presentation. We will have a luncheon in between. Please, bring your own lunch.

We ask for Donations for the Food Bank!



The Foodbank of the Wesley Presbyterian Church, which we support with regular gifts, needs our help desperately. Please bring imperishable food items when you come to the Church Service, so that poor people can have enough to eat at Christmas. Put the food into the baskets set out in the entrance hall. THANK YOU!

Adult Retreat in Camp Edgewood

From **Friday till Sunday, February 9th to 12th**, a **Bible Retreat for Adults** takes place again at Camp Edgewood. Please register now already. We try to arrange car pooling, and will, as usual, meet on Friday, around 4:00 p.m. at the retreat camp of the Lutheran Church, near Guelph. And on Sunday, after we jointly visit the Church Service and have lunch, we will return home.

The topic this year is: **“We are beggars, indeed – or: What it means to be a Lutheran”**

Special events during the season of Advent and Christmas



On the way to Bethlehem



From December 1 to 4 every night from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm an outdoor Christmas pageant takes place at the Country Heritage Park in Milton (8560 Tremaine Rd.). The visitors will be greeted by choir music and a 20 to 30 minute long journey to the stable in Bethlehem. Admission is free, but the organizers ask for donations of any size. The Wolf-family will be there on Saturday night at 6:30 pm and hopes that others join them. For further information visit the web-site www.onthewaytobethlehem.com or phone 905-864-7127.



Tree Lightning Event



For the third time already this event takes place on Sunday, December 3, 4:00 to 6:30 pm, at the corner of Lake Shore Blvd. West and Mimico Ave. (200 m west from our church). The program for kids includes pony riding, face painting, and a bonfire; Carol singing and a visit from Santa is also part of the program. Like all the years before we are going to give out 240 little bags with goodies and a program of all the church services. It would be nice, if some of you could help us with it.



Christmas Celebration at the Moll Berczy Haus



On December 16 the yearly Christmas celebration takes place at the German Senior Residence, Moll Berczy Haus. The residents like to welcome guests. Please bring some cake or cookies!



Christmas Concert of the Men's choir "Harfentöne"



The Christmas concert of the choir "Harfentöne" takes place at St. Patrick's Church (McCaul St. and Dundas St, downtown Toronto) on December 17, at 2:00 pm. Tickets are usually \$12 at the door, but we sell them for \$ 10. Please, ask Hans Vetter and buy as quantities last.

Movie "The Nativity Story"



We plan on a visit to the theatre on December 23 in the afternoon to watch the big movie production on the birth of Jesus. Maybe this brings us into the right mood for Christmas. Details like costs for tickets, place and time will be announced. A list will be placed on the table in the foyer of the church, or please call the church office, if you are interested.

Other invitations from congregations close by arrived

Tapestry of Dreams – Dance, Performance, Photos, Art, Music and Multi-Media. December 7 to 9, starting at 8:00 pm at Mimico Presbyterian Church, 119 Mimico Ave.

Christmas Concert with the East York Concert Band hosted at Wesley Unnited Church at Mimico Ave. Tickets are \$12; \$6 of each sold ticket goes back to our congregation. A list is also posted in the entrance area of our church.

Please, let us know !

We need help in the kitchen providing coffee after the services. Please contact Mrs. Scholz: 905-625-0548.

Do you need a ride to congregational events and church services. Please call 416-251-8293.

Confirmation Class for Adults

Once a month a confirmation class for adults takes place in our church. It is geared to people who like to brush up on their knowledge about their faith. We tackle the meaning and importance of our Lutheran faith.

Piano to give away

Our member Christel Froehlich likes to give away a piano build by the Heintzmann Company. It is in her way in the basement of her house. It has to be dismantled into two pieces to have it transported out. Specialized companies can help with that, but is has to be arranged by the interested person. For further information contact Pastor Wolf.

Apartment for rent

The congregation still has an apartment for rent located in the upper floor of the Day Care building at 5 Superior Ave.

Caretaker needed

We also still look for a person who likes to fill the position as a caretaker. Do you know somebody for the job?

Passed away...

Ms. Olga Pleschke
Mr. A. Stepka
Mr. Gerhard Gayk

Jesus says: I am the light of the world.
John 8:12

We baptized...

Lukas Andrew Wilson

**Show me your path and teach me to follow;
guide me by your truth and instruct me.**

Psalm 24:4+5

The last Word:

**The lights of Advent radiate the glory
which comes to shine
over
the darkness of this
world.**

(Helmut Thielecke)



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